

about 150 of the Federal army brought in. Supplies were immediately sent in, and in that way we did not suffer.

Do excuse me for my long letter, I did not intend to intrude so long on your time and patience. I am anxious to know if you can aid me? and how? If you can purchase some of the land we are ready to sell; if it can be done several hundred acres. I am willing to Sacrifice houses and land, but not the education of my children if it can be accomplished. I have 3 daughters whom I wish to have taught at home and there are several others in the same neighborhood who have lost as we did. If you could do any thing toward establishing a school in our midst, it would benefit us. There is a very competent lady now who is desirous to get a school. I think we could employ her this month for a small salary if we only had the funds—but we have not—& no expectation of getting them. I would be very glad if you can communicate soon if you think you will be able to relieve us. It is my daily thought now how I shall have my children fitted to bear the contest of life successfully. It seems to me God is opening our way as a people, by putting it into the hearts of *good men*, to bestow such great gifts to the youth of an unfortunate land. Our country is passing through a fiery ordeal—may she be purified—God is able to bring order out of confusion. May we speedily have *true peace*, and again become a happy united people.

We live 20 miles above Fayetteville in a healthy good country for a school, if one could be established. I would be glad if you would do what you could for us. There are no boys but plenty of girls. The boys are all educated now except my two; they are ready or nearly so to go off. Please direct to Mr. J. C. Smith.

¹For a description of the Battle of Averasboro, March 15-16, 1865, see Barrett, *Civil War in North Carolina*, 318-325. Barrett notes that the battle (or skirmish) took place in a section of Harnett County called Smithville, presumably because several members of the prominent Smith family lived in the area. Evidently the writer of this letter was one of that family. Barrett mentions three members—Farquard, John, and William Smith; the use of “one of the Smith homes” as a hospital is graphically described, and a letter written by one of the young Smith girls describing the event is quoted.

²Averasboro was a town on the Cape Fear River in southeast Harnett County. After the Civil War the town began to decline and was practically abandoned by 1888. William S. Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 16, hereinafter cited as Powell, *North Carolina Gazetteer*.

³Probably this was William Ruffin Smith (1803-1872), a Halifax County planter who was graduated by the University of North Carolina in 1824. He was a classmate of William A. Graham. Grant, *Alumni History*, 578.